

WEST SIDE LEVEE PROJECT
CRANDIC RAILROAD TO MCCOLLISTER BOULEVARD
IOWA CITY, IOWA

CDBG Contract Number:
08-DRIEF-276

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed project has been evaluated using the following rating system in terms of actual or potential impacts on the environment.

0 = **No Impact Anticipated**

1 = **Potentially Beneficial Impact**

2 = **Potentially Adverse Impacts:** impacts which can be easily mitigation with minimal expense or delay in project implementation.

3 = **Moderate Adverse Impacts:** impacts which can be mitigation through use of special measures which may add extra cost to the project or result in a short delay of project implementation

4 = **Major Adverse Impacts:** impacts which cannot be mitigated or which would require extensive mitigation techniques which would be very costly and/or which would result in long delays in project implementation.

N/P = **Resource Not Present:** after investigation

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I. Purpose and Need for the Project

A. Project Description

The City of Iowa City is proposing to construct permanent flood mitigation measures along the Iowa River in southern Iowa City. The proposed project is located in Section 22, Township 79N, Range 6W of the East Lucas Township of Johnson County, Iowa. The project area is bounded by the CRANDIC Railroad Bridge to the north, McCollister Boulevard to the south, and the Iowa River to the east. The western boundary varies the length of the project but is typically 150 feet from the Iowa River shoreline. The study area includes the project area and a buffer of approximately 0.5 miles. (Figure 1)

The proposed project includes the construction of an earthen levee, riverbank stabilization, and interior storm water drainage improvements. The levee will extend approximately 3000 linear feet along the western bank of the Iowa River from the CRANDIC Railroad Bridge to McCollister Boulevard. Interior storm water drainage improvements include the construction of new storm sewer and storm water pumping stations. Backflow prevention valves will be installed on both new and existing storm outlets. The City of Iowa City intends to have the proposed levee system recognized by FEMA as providing a 1-percent-annual-chance level of protection on NFIP maps. Therefore, the proposed project will be designed and constructed in accordance with 44 CFR Section 65.10 of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Regulations and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Engineer Manual 1110-2-1913, *Design and Construction of Levees*. Construction is scheduled to begin late 2012.

B. Need for the Project

Both Baculis and Thatcher manufactured home parks are bordered by the Iowa River to the east and narrowly escaped flooding in 2008. Construction equipment from the nearby McCollister Boulevard project was enlisted to help protect the area by pushing massive amounts of earth toward the river to create a temporary 10 foot high levee. Sandbags were placed to control the erosion and force of the Iowa River. Approximately 355 residents from both the Baculis and Thatcher neighborhoods and much of the commercial area to the north were evacuated. Should the temporary levee that was constructed have failed, approximately 190 lower income households and fifteen businesses would have been destroyed. As a result of these efforts, both manufactured home parks and much of the commercial area were saved from the floods of 2008.

The proposed project would reduce impacts of future flood events on the fifteen local businesses and two manufactured home parks located in the nearby commercial-industrial and residential areas. If the proposed levee is not constructed, residents of the manufactured home parks and business owners will have a much shorter time period in which to evacuate and a much higher likelihood their health and safety will be threatened. Continued development in this area of Iowa City will likely not occur if permanent mitigation measures are not constructed.

II. Alternatives to the Proposed Action

Several options were considered to resolve the needs of the area in question. The first was to do nothing and leave the existing temporary levee in place. This option is not acceptable as there is no guarantee that this structure, constructed mainly of sand, will hold up to subsequent floods. Because it is likely that the temporary structure would fail, this option would mean evacuating homes and placing residents, volunteers, and public safety personnel in harms way. Another concern is that the temporary levee will give people a false sense of security, leaving them unprepared for future disasters should the structure fail.

The second option considered was to purchase all the property in the 100 year floodplain. This includes property in both the Baculis and Thatcher neighborhoods, and the business park to the north. This option would be prohibitively expensive and eliminate two large neighborhoods with housing stock available to those with limited income. The relocation of 355 people from these neighborhoods would be extremely difficult and was not deemed a viable option.

The proposed project would provide permanent flood mitigation measures for both the existing neighborhood housing stock and businesses in the area. The alignment of the levee has been designed to minimize impacts to the environment and property owners. This option provides the best long-term benefit to the community because it protects both the manufactured home parks and the businesses from future flooding and has the least impact on residents and the environment.

III. Environmental Resources

A. General Land Use

Existing Environment

General land use in the area surrounding the proposed project ranges from commercial-industrial to residential. To the west of the project area there are two manufactured home parks with a combined 190 units and a small business park containing fifteen businesses. The City of Iowa City Streets and Parks Departments and Napoleon Park are located to the east of the project area. The project area is bounded by the CRANDIC Railroad Bridge to the north, McCollister Boulevard to the south, and the Iowa River to the east. (Figure 1)

Potential Impacts

The proposed project complies with current zoning regulations and will not contribute to urban sprawl. This project would protect existing housing, businesses, and public infrastructure rather than relocate residents and business owners to undeveloped areas where new construction would be needed. Because the proposed project will not significantly increase the development or growth in the area, the existing school facilities, retail services, social services, and emergency services are adequate.

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan embraces Smart Growth principles. The plan encourages the provision of lower cost housing alternatives and also has a goal to “maintain and improve the safety of all housing” (page 45). The proposed project accomplishes this goal by protecting the two manufactured home parks from future flooding. Another goal listed in the plan is to protect existing industrial and commercial development and provide areas for possible expansion (page 41). The commercial-industrial area to the west of the project area is one of the few that exist in Iowa City. Protection is critical to the long term vitality of this area. A copy of the 1997 Iowa City Comprehensive Plan is on file with the City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department.

The City of Iowa City owns the majority of the land within the project area; however, approximately 2 acres of land currently owned by the Baculis manufactured home park would need to be acquired in order to construct the levee. A portion of the temporary levee, constructed in 2008 by Baculis, is still in place between the manufactured home park and the Iowa River. This portion of the temporary levee will need to be removed prior to construction of the new levee. Several temporary construction easements will be needed during construction as well.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Conformance with Comprehensive Plans and Zoning	1	City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department; 1997 Iowa City Comprehensive Plan, 2000 South Central District Plan
Compatibility and Urban Impact	1	City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department

B. Important Farmland, Prime Rangeland, and Prime Forest Land

Existing Environment

All of the land in and near the project area is committed to urban development and is not subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 (7 CFR Part 658).

Potential Impacts

Farmland would not be impacted by the proposed project.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Agricultural Lands Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 7CFR Part 658	N/P	City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department; Zoning Map

C. Wild and Scenic River, Formally Classified Lands, Natural landmarks and Wilderness Areas

Existing Environment

The James McCollister Farmstead, located approximately 0.25 miles to the east of the project area, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (added 1976 - #76000776). The location of the James McCollister Farmstead can be seen on Figure 1. There are no other formally classified lands (national parks and monuments, national natural landmarks, national battlefield sites, national historic sites and parks, wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, national seashores, lake shores and trails, state parks, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands, national forest and grassland, and Native American owned lands and leases administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)) within or near the project area. Iowa does not have any wild and scenic rivers as defined under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1271). The proposed project will not impact any state of Iowa important protected water areas. There are not any formally designated rangelands in Iowa and the proposed project will not affect any state forestlands. Napoleon Park, which includes a trail and softball complex, is located to the east of the project area across the Iowa River.

Potential Impacts

The James McCollister Farmstead is sits well outside the flood hazard area and therefore, would not be impacted by the proposed project. No other formally classified lands or wild and scenic rivers would be impacted by the proposed project.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Rangelands and Forestlands	N/P	January 2012, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Website http://www.iowadnr.gov/Destinations/StateForests.aspx
State Protected Water Areas	N/P	January 2012, National Park Service's National Wild and Scenic River Website http://www.rivers.gov/wildriverslist.html
Formally Classified Lands, Recreation, Points of Interest	0	January 2012, National Park Service Website http://www.nps.gov/state/ia/index.htm?program=parks

D. Floodplains

Existing Environment

In September 2009, MMS Consultants, Inc. from Iowa City, Iowa used HEC-RAS flood modeling to show that the floodway was mapped incorrectly through the project area. A Letter of Map Revision was sent to the LOMC Clearinghouse in Elkridge, Maryland, requesting the mapping of the floodway be revised. In January 2010, FEMA concurred with MMS's findings and submitted a Letter of Map Revision Determination Document and an annotated Flood Insurance Rate Map and Flood Insurance Rate Study. Copies of these documents can be found in the ERR along with the correspondence between MMS Consultants, Inc. and the LOMC Clearinghouse.

The project area and the majority of the commercial-industrial and residential areas to the west of the project area are located in the 100 year floodplain as indicated by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) map. (Figure 2)

Potential Impacts

Following the June 2008 flooding along the Iowa River, planning and design work started for flood control improvements along the river within the City of Coralville, the City of Iowa City and the University of Iowa. The City of Iowa City hired HR Green, Inc. from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to conduct the Iowa River Hydraulic Modeling Project. The project involved the hydraulic analysis of various flood events on the Iowa River with all of the proposed flood control improvements "in-place" for each of the three entities. The hydraulic model used HEC-RAS River Analysis System Computer model developed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to determine the overall impacts the proposed improvements would have on river levels during particular flood events. From the modeling results, comparing the existing conditions to the conditions with all proposed improvements "in-place", there is generally an increase in the computed water surface elevation of approximately 0.1 foot.

Because the proposed project is located in the 100-year floodplain and will impact wetlands lands, the 8-step decision making process outlined in 24 CFR Part 55, Subpart C, Section 55.20 was followed. The notice of proposed project to be located in a floodplain or wetland was published on July 19, 2011 in the Press Citizen, a local newspaper. Several options were considered to resolve the needs of the area in question. The proposed levee system was chosen because it offered the best long-term benefit to the community. The alignment of the levee provides protection from future flooding to the commercial-industrial and residential areas and minimizes impacts to the environment and property owners. From the Iowa River Hydraulic Modeling Project results it was also determined that the construction of the levee would not significantly increase the water surface elevation during flood events on the Iowa River. The notice of decision regarding a project located in a floodplain or wetland was published on August 9, 2011 in the Press Citizen. (Copies of the published notices can be found in the ERR)

The proposed levee system will be designed and constructed to meet the requirements detailed in 44 CFR Section 65.10. In order to provide adequate protection from the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event, the levee will be constructed with a minimum freeboard of three feet above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE). During high water events backflow prevention valves would be closed and interior drainage would be collected by new storm sewer constructed behind the levee. The proposed storm sewer would divert the interior drainage to storm water pumping stations and then to the river. Pumps would only operate during high water events.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Floodplains E.O. 11988 (24 CFR Part 55)	1	City of Iowa City Engineering Department; Revised FIRM Map #19103C0195E

E. Wetlands

Existing Environment

In September 2010 MMS Consultants, Inc. delineated various waters of the United States located in the project area. A total of 5.43 acres of wetland between three different wetlands were delineated within the project area. The northern most wetland occurs along the CRANDIC Railroad track, while the other two are adjacent to the Iowa River. All boundaries were identified using the methodology outlined in the *Corp of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual* (January 1987) and the Regional supplement for the Midwest.

A soil map and detailed descriptions of the soils found in the project area were downloaded from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey website (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>) and can be found in the ERR.

Potential Impacts

The City is proposing to impact a total of 2.33 acres of wetland consisting of 1.77 acres of forested and 0.56 acres of emergent wetland. The proposed levee alignment minimizes impacts to wetlands in the project area to the most practical extent possible. Impacts to the wetlands in the northern part of the project area are unavoidable due to the limited size of the City of Iowa City's property and geotechnical conditions. The City owns a larger amount of land in the southern third of the project area. The greatest amount of wetlands are also found in the southern third of the project area. The proposed levee alignment is the most direct path to tie into the high portion of McCollister Boulevard west of the Iowa River crossing. Impacts to wetlands in the southern third of the project area are avoidable; however, the proposed alignment minimizes the amount of large trees that will need to be removed and will allow direct access to the existing sanitary syphon structure during high water events.

The notice of proposed project to be located in a floodplain or wetland and the notice of decision regarding a project located in a floodplain or wetland were published on July 19, 2011 and August 9, 2011 respectively, in the Press Citizen, a local newspaper. (Copies of the published notices can be found in the ERR)

Mitigation

The City of Iowa City is proposing creation and/or enhancement of wetlands both on-site and off-site approximately 0.25 downstream the Iowa River. The proposed mitigation will provide, at a minimum, no net loss of wetland function and values to the Iowa River watershed locally. On site mitigation consists of converting non wetland areas into emergent wetlands by removing an existing gravel drive and introducing native wetland vegetation. The offsite mitigation area is located east of the Iowa River and west of Sand Lake and is proposed to increase and enhance forested wetlands adjacent to a multi-use open water complex. The proposed mitigation consists of the creation of 2.66 acres of forested wetland for a 1.5:1 compensation ratio. In order to reduce the ratio for creation, the proposed mitigation will include the enhancement of 5.42 acres of forested wetland at a 6:1 ratio. The combination of wetland creation and enhancement at the proposed ratios equates

to the required 2:1 or 3.54 acres of compensation. The proposed mitigation sites, both on-site and off-site, will receive and retain overland sheet flow runoff from surrounding uplands as well as receive groundwater from underground seepage from high river levels. Copies of the Wetland Delineation Report and Mitigation Plan can be found in the ERR.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Wetlands E.O. 11990 (24 CFR Part 55)	3	February 2012, Christine M. Schwake, Environmental Specialist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

F. Cultural Resources, Historical and Archaeological

Existing Environment

In August of 2009 Bear Creek Archeology, Inc. from Cresco, Iowa conducted an intensive Phase I cultural resources and geomorphological investigation for the proposed project. The area of potential effect (APE) is approximately 9.2 acres. Bear Creek's investigation consisted of archival research and landform evaluations as well as a pedestrian survey. The cultural resources survey was conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (Advisory Council of Historic Preservation 1984, 1999) and the Secretary of the Interior's standards for the identification of historic properties (National Park Service 1983). The fieldwork and report were designed to meet or exceed the state's guidelines for archeological investigations in Iowa (Kaufmann 1999) and the archeological requirements for the Johnson County Sensitive Areas Ordinance 04-26-07-Z1.

Research indicated the project area had little to no archeological potential. A review of records held at the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA), Iowa City, Iowa, detailed 18 previously recorded sites within a one mile radius of the APE. Additionally, two previous archeological surveys have been conducted within the APE. A review of historical plat maps and historical aerial photographs indicated no documented structures occurred within the project area and no historically significant figures are associated with the APE.

Information provided by the soil survey indicated the project area resides on a heavily disturbed landform. Field methodology consisted of obtaining soil profiles to determine the geomorphological context of the project area and a pedestrian survey. The soil profiles indicated the alluvial features within the APE are comprised of recent alluvium and disturbed areas.

Potential Impacts

No cultural resources were identified by Bear Creek's investigation; therefore the proposed project will not affect any historic properties. A permanent structure, a City of Iowa City wastewater lift station, is located in the APE; however, this lift station is less than 50 years old and was constructed after an earlier cultural resources investigation. There are two manufactured homes located in the APE as well, but they are not permanent structures and will be relocated or demolished prior to construction.

Bear Creek's findings were submitted to the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in April of 2011. SHPO was able to concur with the determination of 'no historic properties affected' based on the results of the study. A copy of Bear Creek's report and the SHPO concurrence can be found in the ERR.

In July of 2011 tribal authorities were contacted and informed of the findings in accordance with the *Tribal Authorities List: Contacts for Section 106 Compliance*. Tribal correspondence documents can be found in the ERR.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological (36 CFR Part 55)	0	April 29, 2011, Daniel K. Higginbottom, Archaeologist, Iowa State Historical Preservation Office

G. Biological Resources Critical Habitat or Endangered/Threatened Species Act

Existing Environment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists one endangered species (Indiana Bat), three threatened species (Prairie Bush Clover, Western Prairie Fringed orchid, and Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid), and one candidate species (Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake) as occurring in Johnson County, Iowa (USFWS, July 2011). On July 25, 2011, a survey for potential habitat for the above species was performed in the Project area by the City of Iowa City's Environmental Coordinator. It was determined that the habitat conditions in the project area are not generally favorable for the Indiana Bat, Prairie Bush Clover, Western Prairie Fringed orchid, Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, and Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake.

In June of 2011, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) performed an Environmental Review for Natural Resources in the project area. The IDNR determined that there were numerous records of state-listed mussels in close proximity of the proposed riverbank stabilization. On September 26, 2011, a freshwater mussel survey was conducted by Malacological Consultants from La Crosse, Wisconsin. Among the 159 mussels (16 species) found alive, 12 were pistolgrip mussels, *Tritogonia verrucosa* (7.5%), and one was a yellow sandshell, *Lampsilis teres anodontoides*, both Iowa Endangered species. Also found in the area to be impacted by levee construction and riverbank riprap were two young hickorynut, *Obovaria olivaria*, each about three years of age. No adult federally endangered mussel species, such as Higgins eye, *Lampsilis higginsii* were found. During mussel survey water levels were low, mostly as a result of the Coralville Dam being nearly closed for repairs.

A copy of the biological assessment, mussel study report, and IDNR correspondence can be found in the ERR.

Potential Impacts

A few large trees will be removed as part of the project; however, removal of potential Indiana Bat roost trees will occur after September 15 and before April 15 to avoid the summer roosting period.

Mitigation

As mitigation for the expected impacts from the construction of a levee and installation of shoreline riprap, all mussels found were translocated from the west side of the Iowa River to two sites near the east Iowa River shoreline, within the impact area. The Iowa DNR will issue a Sovereign Lands Permit for the proposed project. Construction will also be inspected by a local Iowa DNR representative to ensure impacts are minimized or avoided whenever possible.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Endangered Species Act (50 CFR Part 402)	3	February 2012, Kelly Poole, Environmental Specialist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

H. Water Supply & Quality & Groundwater

Existing Environment

The existing water supply comes from the Iowa City Water Treatment Plant approximately 3.75 miles north of the project area. Water from the Iowa City Water Treatment plant is safe and free from contamination. It is not anticipated that the proposed project will require a water supply.

In late 2009 a geotechnical evaluation was performed in the Project area by Braun Intertec from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The evaluation determined that the groundwater level varied in depth from 7 feet to 12 feet below the existing soil surface.

Potential Impacts

The proposed project would not affect Iowa City's water supply quality or use. The proposed project would also not affect the groundwater in the Project area. After completing the geotechnical evaluation Braun made several recommendations concerning the design and construction of the proposed levee. During construction, they recommended stripping the top soil and fill beneath the proposed levee to a depth between 1 and 5 feet. Braun also recommended completing an inspection trench below the centerline of the levee to a minimum depth of 3 feet. It is not anticipated that groundwater will be encountered during stripping or the excavation of the inspection trench.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Water Supply Safe Drinking Water Act (42 USC 5.300)	0	June 2009, City of Iowa City Water Division

I. Coastal Zone Management Area & Coastal Barrier Resources System

Existing Environment

Iowa does not have any coastal zone management areas or coastal barrier areas.

Potential Impacts

Coastal Zone Management Areas and Coastal Barrier Areas would not be impacted by the proposed project.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Coastal Zone Management	N/P	N/A

J. Storm Water

Existing Environment

The existing storm sewer in the commercial-industrial area was designed for a 5 year event. The existing storm sewer in the manufactured home parks consists of a system of area intakes connected by 6 inch and 8 inch drain tile. There is an overland flow route for both areas that allows runoff to flow to the Iowa River when the capacity of the exiting storm sewer systems is exceeded.

Potential Impacts

The proposed project will disturb approximately 10 acres of land and will require a NPDES permit. Sediment and erosion control will be addressed in greater detail in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), but will include preventative measures such as silt socks, turf reinforcing mats and erosion control blankets, and floating silt curtains.

Runoff from the commercial-industrial and residential areas to the west of the levee, will be collected and diverted to pump structures and then to the river during high water events. The proposed storm sewer has been designed to collect the overland flow from a 100-year storm event. The two pump structures, located on the north and south ends of the proposed levee, house pumps that have also been sized to handle the 100 year storm runoff for each drainage area. Storm outlets will be constructed with backflow prevention valves. When the water surface elevation of the Iowa River is high, the backflow prevention valves will be closed and interior drainage will be pumped to the river.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Storm Water	2	City of Iowa City Wastewater Department

K. Waste Water

Existing Environment

The City of Iowa City Wastewater Treatment Plant is approximately 2 miles southwest of the project area. There is also a sanitary lift station located in the project area.

The existing wastewater system will adequately serve the project area because the proposed project will not produce or cause an increase in sanitary effluent.

Potential Impacts

The proposed project would not affect Iowa City's wastewater system nor would its proximity to the wastewater treatment plant have a negative effect on the project area. The sanitary structure located in the project area will be raised to the same elevation as the proposed levee; however, operation and capacity will remain unchanged.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Waste Water	0	City of Iowa City Wastewater Department

L. Surface Water

Existing Environment

The Project area and commercial-industrial and residential areas to the west are located in the Lower Iowa River watershed. The Iowa River also forms the eastern boundary of the project area. Data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) shows that reaches of the Iowa River, including the portion bordering the Project area, are impaired. The cause of the impairment is unknown impaired biota and pathogens. A copy of the USEPA watershed data can be found in the ERR.

Willow Creek is located to the west of the project area. It's confluence with the Iowa River is approximately 0.5 miles south of the proposed project. A small lake is located approximately 0.25 miles southeast of the project area on the eastern side of the Iowa River.

Potential Impacts

The proposed project will not involve the discharge of sewage effluent into surface water bodies nor will it involve a substantial increase in impervious surface areas.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Surface Water	0	City of Iowa City Engineering Department; January 2012, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Website, http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/huc.cfm?huc_code=07080209

M. Socio-Economic Information/Environmental Justice Issues

Existing Environment

The area protected by the proposed project consists of a mix of residential, commercial and industrial development. The residential area includes the Baculis and Thatcher manufactured home parks. The two residential parks contain a combined 190 units and house approximately 355 people, most of which are lower to moderate income. For most of the residents this is the only affordable housing option in the area. The 2010 Census data for the area is listed below.

Racial/Ethnic Group	Number of Persons	
	Each Group	Hispanic Origin
White	216	63
Black or African American	14	0
Asian	0	0
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0	0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White; Asian	0	0
White; Black or African American	5	0
Black or African American; American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0
Other Multi-Racial	4	53

Total Persons Served	Total LMI Persons Served	LMI Benefit
355	187	53%

The commercial-industrial area to the west of the project area is one of the few that still exist in Iowa City. It has rail access, access to the Interstate System, and access to the Iowa City Airport. Businesses in this area include not only small, one person businesses and craftsmen, but also businesses that provide services throughout eastern Iowa.

Potential Impacts

Constructing the proposed levee would have both local and regional benefits. Without permanent flood mitigation measures, continued development will not occur in this area of Iowa City. Therefore, protection is critical to the long term vitality of this commercial-industrial and residential area.

Two manufactured homes, belonging to the Baculis manufactured home park, are currently located in the project area. These homes will need to be acquired to construct the levee. The City of Iowa City will provide relocation assistance for the displaced residents per 24 CFR Part 42 guidelines.

Since the proposed project does not make land available for additional housing, the existing fire, police and emergency medical services are adequate for the area.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Displacement	2	January 2012, City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department
Employment and Income Patterns	0	City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department
Demographic or Character Changes	0	City of Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department

N. Air Quality

Existing Environment

Johnson County is currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants (EPA, January 2011)

Potential Impacts

Construction would generate minor amounts of emissions from construction equipment and fugitive dust from soil disturbance. Impacts to air quality would be slight, but air quality standards would not be exceeded.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Air Quality	0	Environmental Protection Agency Website http://www.epa.gov/airquality/greenbk/anc13.html

O. Transportation

Existing Environment

The Iowa City Municipal Airport is located approximately 0.5 miles to the northeast of the project area.

McCollister Boulevard, a vital east-west arterial street connecting Gilbert Street, Riverside Drive, and US Highway 1. McCollister Boulevard also forms the southern boundary of the Project area. Commercial Drive, a local road ending in a cul-de-sac, is the only entrance into the commercial-industrial area. The two manufactured home parks have a single point of access off Riverside Drive which is a local road. The roads located within the manufactured home parks are privately owned.

Potential Impacts

The existing transportation infrastructure will meet the needs of the proposed project. The proposed project will only encourage additional vehicle trips and energy consumption during construction. Access for construction equipment and crews will be located off Commercial Drive to the north and McCollister Boulevard to the south. It is not anticipated that construction activities will significantly impact traffic flow in the area or require detours. The privately owned roads in the manufactured home parks will not be used at any time during construction.

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan has a goal to “establish a system of bikeways and trails connecting parks, schools, neighborhoods and the downtown area” (page 49). The proposed project would allow the Iowa River Corridor Trail to be extended to serve this area. The multi-use path is scheduled for construction in the future which will encourage additional pedestrian traffic. Because there is a trail system already in place, transportation safety issues are not anticipated.

The Iowa City Municipal Airport is not designated as a primary/commercial airport. The proposed project is not anticipated to affect airspace at the airport; however, in accordance with 14 CFR 77, the contractor would need to use the Notice Criteria Tool available at <http://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp> to determine if construction equipment would potentially obstruct airspace at the airport.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Runway Clear Zones and Accident Potential Zones	0	Michael Tharp, City of Iowa City Municipal Airport

P. Noise

Existing Environment

The CRANDIC Railroad Bridge forms the northern boundary of the Project area. McCollister Boulevard, an east-west arterial street, forms the southern boundary of the Project area. The businesses located in the commercial-industrial area are mainly construction and landscaping companies.

The Iowa City Municipal Airport is also located approximately 0.5 miles to the northeast of the project area.

Potential Impacts

Noise control does not apply since the proposed project does not make land available for housing or noise sensitive development.

Iowa City code limits the hours construction equipment may be operated; however, noise generated by construction equipment would not reach unacceptable levels.

Because the pumps would only operate when the water surface elevation of the Iowa River is high, noise generated by the pumps would be short term and intermittent. Post construction noise levels would be identical to the current noise levels in the project area.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Noise (24 CFR Part 51 Subpart B)	0	HUD Noise Assessment Guidelines

Q. Hazardous Waste

Existing Environment

The proposed project does not involve any site hazards (uncontrolled access to lakes or streams, improperly screened drains, lack of access to emergency vehicles, hazardous waste dumps, or facilities handling chemicals of an explosive matter), traffic hazards, waste dumps, explosive and flammable operations, or natural hazards. There are no toxic chemicals or radioactive materials stored or produced in the Project area.

Potential Impacts

The two manufactured homes that are currently in the project area will either be relocated or demolished. If the homes are demolished the debris will be taken to the Johnson County Landfill approximately 7.5 miles away.

Impact Category	Rating	Date/Name/Title of Contact or Information Source
Toxic & Radioactive Hazards	0	City of Iowa City Fire Department

IV. Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The proposed project is part of the City of Iowa City's overall flood recovery efforts. The proposed improvements would reduce impacts of future flood events on fifteen local businesses and two manufactured home parks located in the nearby commercial-industrial and residential areas. The Baculis and Thatcher manufactured home parks contain a combined 190 units and house approximately 355 people, most of who are lower to moderate income. Two manufactured homes will need to be acquired to construct the proposed levee; however, the City of Iowa City will provide relocation assistance for the displaced residents. Continued development in this area of Iowa City will likely not occur if permanent mitigation measures are not constructed.

The proposed project has the potential to impact wetlands. However, the proposed wetland mitigation will provide, at a minimum, no net loss of wetland function and values to the Iowa River watershed locally. Threatened and Endangered species may potentially be impacted by the proposed project as well. To minimize impacts to potential Indiana Bat habitat, the proposed alignment will minimize the amount of large trees that will need to be removed in the project area. Also, removal of roost trees will occur after September 15 and before April 15 to avoid the summer roosting period. As mitigation for the expected impacts to freshwater mussels from the shoreline riprap, all mussels found within the impact area were translocated from the west side of the Iowa River to two sites near the eastern shoreline. Construction will also be inspected by a local Iowa DNR representative to ensure impacts are minimized or avoided whenever possible.

This Environmental Assessment has determined that the proposed project will have no significant adverse socio-economic or environmental impacts of a level that would warrant an Environmental Impact Statement. Unless significant impacts are identified as a result of a public review, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared for the proposed project in accordance with CDBG guidelines.

V. Citizen Participation

On July 20, 2009 the City of Iowa City published a notice regarding the submittal of an application for supplemental CDBG disaster recovery funding in a local newspaper. The intent of the notice was to provide citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed project and application prior to submittal. No comments were received.

On December 1, 2010, Jim Hammes, owner of the Thatcher manufactured home park, wrote a letter to City Council that discussed his support of the project.

On December 7, 2010, there was a public hearing held for the proposed project at the Iowa City City Council meeting.

All public comments can be found in the ERR.

VI. Conclusion

Based on the information derived from the review and evaluation of the above items and of supporting documentation, the City of Iowa City finds that the request for release of funds for the proposed project is not an action that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) has been reached.

Figures



<p><i>IOWA CITY</i> ENGINEERING DIVISION</p>	<p>Project: FIGURE 1, PROJECT AREA</p>	<p>Scale: NA</p>	<p>Date: January 2012</p>
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Figure 1. Aerial Image of the Project Area

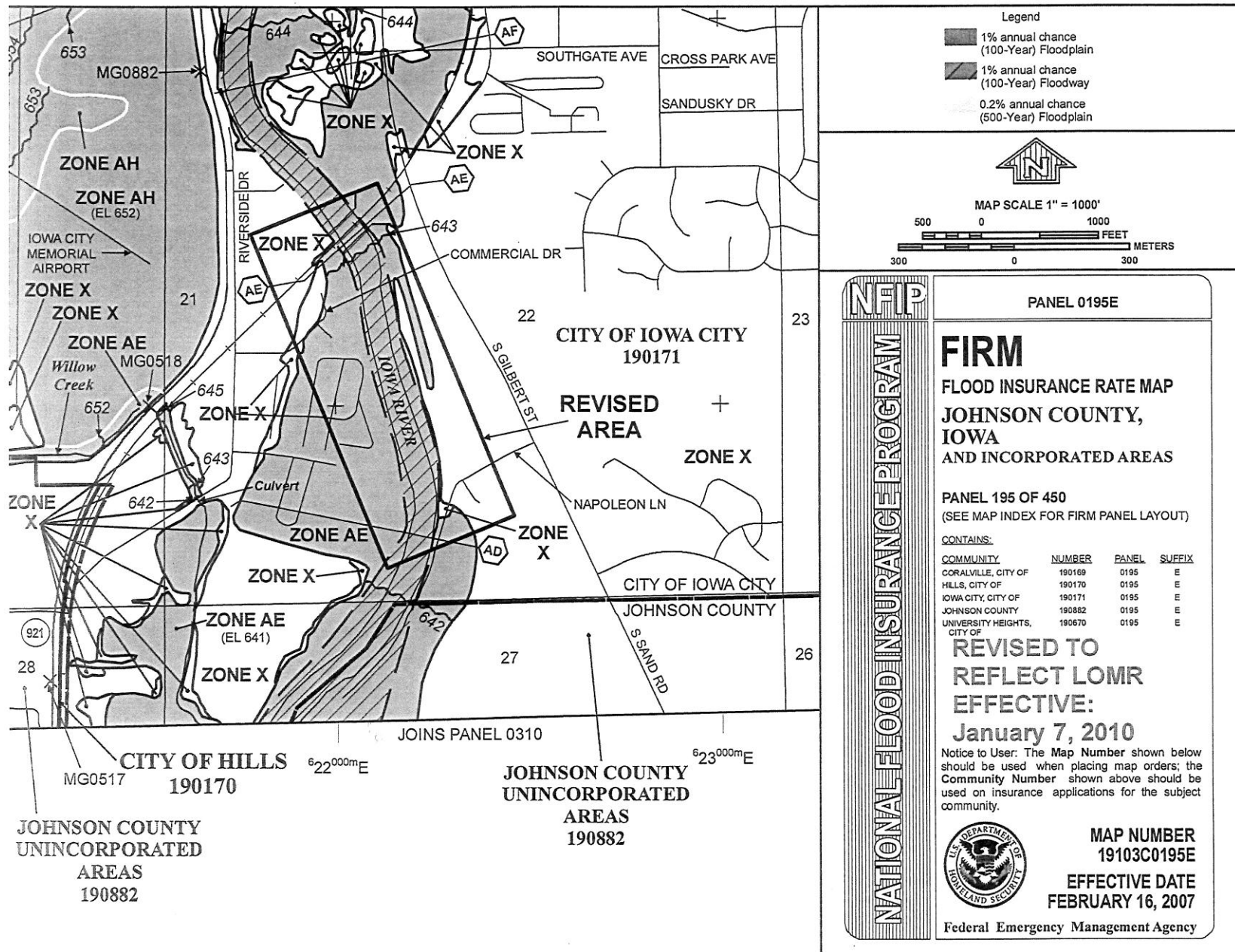


Figure 2. Revised FIRM Map Number 191030195E